

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 HA-05 SSM-03
/110 W

-----048302 171924Z /53

P 171825Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0571
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH

AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 07973

DEPT. PASS SECDEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, UR, XF, PLO
SUBJECT: PRAVDA ARTICLE ON M.E.

SUMMARY: PRAVDA M.E. ARTICLE USES INVASION OF LEBANON TO
CRITICIZE EXTENSIVELY SADAT'S POLICIES. ISRAELIS AND U.S.
TAKE THEIR SHARE OF BLAME FOR NEGATIVE TURN OF EVENTS IN
M.E. AND PALESTINIANS, IN FORM OF PLO, ARE SEEN AS
DETERMINED TO KEEP UP STRUGGLE. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY WISHES TO DRAW DEPT.'S ATTENTION TO LENGTHY
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ARTICLE ON CURRENT M.E. SITUATION BY PAVEL DEMCHENKO IN
APRIL 15 PRAVDA. DEMCHENKO, CHIEF OF PRAVDA'S AFRO-
ASIAN DEPT., WAS IN DAMASCUS WHEN THE ISRAELIS INVADED
LEBANON. AFTER ESTABLISHING HIS CREDENTIALS WITH A FEW
EYE WITNESS ACCOUNTS FROM THE LEBANESE FRONT, HE MAKES
THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- ISRAELI TACTICAL GOALS IN LEBANON MUST BE VIEWED AGAINST BACKGROUND OF "CONFUSED" M.E. SITUATION. CENTRAL TO THIS IS THE CURRENT POLICY OF EGYPT - MARKED SINCE 1974 BY SADAT'S "OPEN DOOR" ECONOMIC POLICY. EGYPT'S RENUNCIATION OF NASSER'S "PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL COURSE," ITS TURN AWAY FROM COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND ITS ANTI-SOVIETISM HAS LED THE COUNTRY TO A GROWING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS.

-- EGYPT, TO EVADE ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS, HAS ADOPTED A "PEACE AT ANY PRICE" POLICY REPRESENTED BY SADAT'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM AND SUBSEQUENT SEPARATE TALKS WITH THE ISRAELIS. U.S. POLICY, BEGUN BY KISSINGER, HAS PREPARED THE WAY FOR THESE INITIATIVES AND WAS READY TO "REWARD" SADAT FOR HIS EFFORTS. BUT SADAT'S PLANS WERE BASED MORE ON EMOTIONS THAN ON REALITIES. BELIEVING THAT SADAT HAS WEAKENED HIS POSITION IN THE INTERNATIONAL AND INTER-ARAB ARENA, ISRAEL HAS RAISED THE ANTE.

-- BEGIN'S INTENTION TO RETAIN THE SETTLEMENTS IN SINAI AND GOLAN AND HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AS "LIBERATED TERRITORIES" SHOW THE FUTILITY OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS. NOT A SINGLE ARAB COUNTRY WANTED TO JOIN THESE TALKS.

-- YET ATTEMPTS ARE MADE TO CONTINUE THEM BECAUSE THE U.S. ENCOURAGES CAIRO AND TEL AVIV TO CREATE AN "APPEARANCE CONFIDENTIAL

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OF MOVEMENT" TOWARD M.E. SETTLEMENT. THE U.S., AS JAMES RESTON OF THE N.Y. TIMES HAS SHOWN, IS ALSO PROCEEDING WITH PENTAGON PLANS TO USE A COMPROMISE M.E. SOLUTION AS A MEANS OF ESTABLISHING A U.S. AIR BASE IN SINAI AND A NAVAL BASE IN HAIFA.

-- IN CAIRO, "RATHER WELL INFORMED" PEOPLE TOLD DEMCHENKO THAT ISRAELI "EMISSARIES" (OUTSIDE OF THE CABINET) HAD OFFERED WESTERN "ZIONIST" CAPITAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE NILE VALLEY IN RETURN FOR EGYPTIAN CONCESSIONS ON TERRITORY AND ON PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION (DEMCHENKO WONDERS HOW THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN LIGHT OF ISRAEL'S OWN CHRONIC ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES).

-- ISRAEL HAD SEVERAL GOALS IN MIND WHEN IT INVADED LEBANON: (A) EXPAND TERRITORY, (B) HEAT UP M.E. SITUATION AS WHOLE, (C) DEAL BLOW TO PALESTINE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. BUT PLO REMAINS MAIN OBSTACLE TO ISRAELI AMBITIONS. ISRAELI AGGRESSION IS ATTEMPT TO THREATEN PALESTINIANS WITH PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IF THEY PERSIST IN THEIR STRUGGLE. THUS, THE ISRAELIS PROPOSE ONLY ONE WAY OUT: ACCEPTANCE OF THE AMERICAN-ISRAELI

PLAN WHICH INCLUDES A LIMITED AUTONOMY FOR THE WEST BANK
OR A REFERENDUM AMONG THE PALESTINIANS THERE TO
DETERMINE WHETHER THEY WILL BECOME CITIZENS OF JORDAN
OR OF ISRAEL.

-- BUT ALL THESE CONSIDERATIONS IGNORE THE ROLE OF
PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN THE M.E. AND ARAB PUBLIC OPINION.
IN THIS REGARD THE INVASION OF LEBANON MAY REPRESENT
A BOOMERANG AGAINST ITS INITIATORS BY STRENGTHENING
THE ANTI-ISRAELI, ANTI-U.S. MOOD AMONG THE MASSES AND
BY FURTHER LIMITING THE BASIS FOR MANEUVERING BY THOSE
FORCES INCLINED TOWARD A BEHIND-THE-SCENES DEAL WITH
TEL AVIV.

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 07973

-- PLO, AS ARAFAT HAS SAID, IS FULLY DETERMINED TO CON-
TINUE STRUGGLE FOR PALESTINIAN NATIONAL RIGHTS. CHANGES
ARE EVEN OCCURRING IN EGYPTIAN PUBLIC OPINION WHICH
CANNOT TUT EXERT INFLUENCE ON COLLAPSE OF POLICY OF
SEPARATE TALKS AND ISOLATION OF COUNTRY FROM ARAB WORLD
AND SOCIALIST STATES.

2. COMMENT: DEMCHENKO'S SOMEWHAT DISCONNECTED
COMMENTARY IS INTERESTING PRIMARILY FOR ITS EMPHASIS ON
THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF EGYPTIAN INTERNAL AND FOREIGN
POLICIES. IN CONTEXT, HE DEVOTES LESS ATTENTION TO
ISRAELIS THEMSELVES AND EVEN TO AMERICANS. BUT AMERICANS
STILL REMAIN THE REAL BEHIND SCENES VILLAINS OF THE
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HIECE AND WE SUSPECT THIS WILL BE THE MESSAGE WHICH
SOVIETS WILL DELIVER DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT LATER
THIS WEEK. DEMCHENKO'S FINAL COMMENT ON "CHANGES" IN
EGYPTIAN PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST SEPARATE TALKS AND FOR
RETURN TO ARAB CAMP AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES SEEMS TO
GO SLIGHTLY BEYOND USUAL SOVIET RHETORIC. WHILE WE
DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY TO WHAT HE IS REFERRING WE WILL
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANY ADDITIONAL SOVIET MATERIAL IN
THIS REGARD. TOON

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